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Information Bulletin

# **Supporting DA's: the Need for Economic Needs Analysis**

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**This bulletin was compiled by :**

**Gary Garner**

*BBus(Econs&Finance), AssocDip Val, PAg, CertAg, GradDip (B&M), AAPI, Certified Practicing Registered Valuer (Qld) 1959*

**Manager, Research & Urban Economic Strategies**

**and**

**Hollie Layton**

*Ad Dip (Int Des) BBE (Land Arch) Grad Dip (Urb Des)*

**Project Manager**

**THG Resource Strategist  
Level 4 Astor Centre  
445 Upper Edward Street  
Brisbane Qld 4000**

**Contact:  
Mr Gary Garner  
Ms Hollie Layton**

**PO Box 130  
Spring Hill Qld 4004**

## Supporting DA's: the Need for Economic Needs Analysis

All savvy Property Developers are aware of the statutory governing act "*Integrated Planning Act 1997* (IPA)" that regulates any form of development in Queensland. The purpose of the act is to provide the framework for Queensland's planning and development assessment system. The lodgment of a Development Application (DA) is a requirement for all forms of development, for example, carrying out building work , operational work , reconfiguring a lot or making a material change of use.

The Integrated Development Assessment System (IDAS) is the system established under the IPA to manage the lodgement and assessment of most development related activities, including planning, building, environmental, coastal and water management. IPA Planning schemes are prepared by Councils, with input from State government agencies and establish the policy for managing the use and development of land in their local government area. Planning schemes also integrate State, regional and local development strategies and recommendations for the local government area (accessed 080208, The State of Queensland- Department of Infrastructure and Planning)

These local Planning schemes in Queensland use tools such as zoning maps, overlay maps, development assessment tables, codes and local planning scheme policies to implement the desired outcomes of the IPA sought through development. When submitting a DA applicant's must demonstrate how a proposal satisfies the Development Vision, Performance Criteria and Performance Standards contained in the Development Guidelines.

Generally, the scale and nature of a proposed development will determine the complexity and nature of the application required, and the quantum of information included in the application. Specialist consultants are usually engaged, especially in larger or more complex projects, to assist in providing technical detail and addressing specific licensing issues.

Increasingly, assessment authorities are also insisting upon the provision of economic and social needs analysis. This ensures that a particular project is able to genuinely respond to the needs of a community, and at the same time provide an appraisal of the economic benefits that the project brings. This often involves the use of various techniques which interrogate a wide range of data sets. This includes, for example, population and demographic profiling, economic modeling and forecasting, and community trend analysis.

In recognition of this, THG has established a Regional and Urban Economic Planning unit, under the management of Mr Gary Garner - a lecturer in Property & Urban Development at the Queensland University of Technology, and an expert in urban economics. The response to date has been very positive. The provision of economic needs analysis – even where it has not been specifically required by the relevant authority – has greatly assisted the progression of a number of projects. Recent examples include various analysis to support the bringing forward of timeframes for establishment of a railway station in the Gold Coast region, the early and simultaneous sequencing of a new multi-precinct

development in south-east Queensland, the inclusion of land for urban development that is outside the urban footprint, and the impact of a project on the viability of the local sugar industry in far north Queensland.

The evidence seems to be that a *proactive* approach in providing this kind of information is more likely to bring about a positive result. It has the added benefit to provide useful feedback to the developer themselves - providing a cross-check of project viability, the likely risks to be encountered, and ways those risks might be mitigated. It is a win-win situation for all.